

Celmisia lyallii

COMMON NAME

false Spaniard

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Celmisia lyallii Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

CELLYA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 108

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: widespread in drier sites so found mainly east of the main divide.

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine open grassland, herbfield, fellfield



Danseys pass, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Craigieburn Skifield, Canterbury (leaf detail). Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted rigid herb with short pseudo-stem arising from us. simple stock. Leaves rigid, coriaceous, narrow-ensiform tapering regularly to pungent apex; lamina 20-60 × 6-9 mm; upper surface glabrous, very finely striate to smooth; lower surface strongly grooved, densely clad in thin appressed white satiny tomentum to almost glabrous (in different plants); margins slightly recurved, entire. Sheath abruptly widened from somewhat constricted lamina-base, 30-80 × 10-15 mm, thin, grooved, clad in appressed white satiny tomentum. Scape 15-36 mm long, rather slender, white with ± floccose tomentum, ± concealed by bract-sheaths. Bracts numerous, crowded; lowest leaf-like, to 60 mm long, diminishing in size toward scape apex, uppermost c.10 mm long, forming a pseudo-involucre. Capitula 25-50 mm diameter; involucre bracts linear-subulate, rigid, indurated, ± 20 mm long, midrib prominent. Ray-florets very slender, 12-14 mm long, white; limb hardly wider than tube, 4-toothed. Disk-florets 6-7 mm long, tubular, lobes triangular. Achenes 2-3 mm long, compressed-cylindric, strongly grooved; hairs minute, stiff, very minutely barbellate

SIMILAR TAXA

The dry land equivalent of *Celmisia armstrongii* and *C. petriei*. From *Celmisia petriei* it is distinguished by the very rigid, narrow leaves with pungent apices, the leaf has only a single prominent midrib rather than a stout, parallel pair of veins either side of an obscure central midrib. from *Celmisia armstrongii*, *C. lyallii* differs by its very pungent (sharp tipped leaves). and by the absence of a broad yellow band either side of the midrib on the upper leaf surface.

FLOWERING

November - February

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

December - April

LIFE CYCLE

Pappate cypselae are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a shaded site, planted within a permanently moist, free draining, acidic soil. Dislikes humidity and will not tolerate drying out. Best grown from fresh seed which should be sown immediately or stratified in a fridge or freezer for 1-3 months

ETYMOLOGY

celmisia: Apparently named after Kelmis, one of Idaean Dactyls, a group of skilled mythical beings associated with the Mother Goddess Rhea in Greek mythology. Kelmis, whose name means 'casting', was a blacksmith and childhood friend of Zeus, son of Rhea and later king of the gods. In Ovid's 'Metamorphoses', Kelmis is described as offending Zeus who turned him into adamant so he was as hard as a tempered blade

lyallii: Named after David Lyall (1817-1895), 19th century Scottish naturalist and surgeon with the Royal Navy, who explored Antarctica, New Zealand, the Arctic and North America and was a lifelong friend of Sir Joseph Hooker.

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from: Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I, Government Printer, Wellington

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/celmisia-lyallii/>